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SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (10/22): Palestinians continue to question Hamas's intentions regarding national reconciliation

Main Stories:

The dailies prominently report that US Ambassador to the UN Susan Rice pledged, during her meeting with Israeli President Shimon Peres yesterday, that the US will defend the Israeli position on the Goldstone report at the UN. Rice promised to urge the UNHRC to stop criticizing Israel for the findings of the report.

Al-Hayat Al-Jadida leads with Palestinian Liberation Organization Chief Negotiator Saeb Erekat calling on the US to publicly acknowledge that Israel is obstructing the peace process. In related coverage, the dailies report on talks between Israeli and US officials in Washington last week, including an expectation that negotiations with the Palestinians will resume soon. The reports note that the Israelis stressed that negotiations must be based on UN resolutions 242 and 338. The Palestinian Authority (PA) Presidency's office spokesperson Nabil Abu Rudeina criticized this demand, saying it is unrealistic to resume negotiations based on resolution 242 since it does not call for Israel's complete withdrawal from the West Bank. Abu Rudeina noted that such a demand by the Israelis will take things back to square one.

The dailies report on Fatah's announcement yesterday that it will not accept any amendments to the Egyptian proposal for national reconciliation. Fatah accused Hamas of wasting time to avoid signing the national reconciliation agreement. In related news, the press reports that Hamas leader Ismail Ridwan said Hamas is waiting for Egypt to invite them to Cairo to discuss the proposed amendments. He stated that Hamas can't sign the current proposal since it is biased against Hamas.

Al-Quds leads with comments by Fatah leader Marwan Barghouti

(imprisoned in an Israeli jail) that there is no rational excuse or justification behind postponing the reconciliation agreement. He commended the PA for its efforts to resubmit the Goldstone report to UNHRC, noting that this step should be appreciated by all parties. He also stated that he doesn't see any Israeli partner who is serious about the peace process.

BLOCK QUOTES:

1) Rimonda Taweel opines in Al-Quds independent daily under the title "Nobel, Obama and Hope" (10/22): "By having President Obama accept the Nobel prize, we understand that he is ready to bear responsibility. We know that he won't let the whole world down ... We, the Palestinians, want Obama to be the man of the world, the man of peace."

2) Omar Hilmi Al-Ghoul opines in Al-Ayyam independent daily under the title "How to Fill the Constitutional Vacuum?"(10/22): "If the reconciliation agreement is not signed, we have to be ready to face a severe constitutional vacuum ... We have to prepare legal and constitutional solutions that will protect the Palestinians from a major crisis."

RUBINSTEIN